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Letter dated 25 November 1994 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit, enclosed herewith, the statement made on 22 November 1994 by His Excellency Mr. Zoran Lilic, President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, to the Commission for Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence Policy of the European Parliament, in Brussels (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda item 70 and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIĆ
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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ANNEX

[Original: English and French]

It is with pleasure that I have accepted the invitation to address this august gathering in the European Parliament, with which Yugoslavia has had very good relations for many years and with which we have sought to maintain links and cooperation during these times as well.

Allow me to present the principal positions of my country on the most important questions affecting the resolution of the crisis in the area of the former Yugoslavia and on the economic and political development and international position of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is vitally committed to peace and stability, both in its immediate environs, as well as in the entire Mediterranean and in Europe. Ever since the outbreak of the crisis we have called for peaceful solutions. We have supported the peace process and in so doing we always upheld the principles of equality and equal respect for the interests of all the peoples of the former SFRY.

By the concrete steps it has taken in the negotiating process so far the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has proven that it is genuinely committed to a lasting and just solution to all the problems stemming from the secession of the former Yugoslav republics, first and foremost to an end of the civil war in the former Bosnia-Herzegovina.

On this occasion I wish to recall that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has taken the following steps:

- signed the Vance Plan for Krajina which it considers to be the basis of all future activities aimed at peace;
- supported all the five peace plans for ending the civil war in the former Bosnia-Herzegovina - from the Cutilhero plan of March 1992, to the most recent one proposed by the Contact Group;
- given its full support and tangible material assistance to UNPROFOR in discharging its peacekeeping role, as well as to a large number of humanitarian organizations;
- in its Constitution and Declaration of the Federal Assembly of April 27, 1992, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia declared that it had no territorial claims on any former Yugoslav republic;

- in these same acts it declared its full readiness for the association of the former Yugoslav republics if and when any one of them expressed such an interest; its openness to the restoration of economic, traffic, energy and other flows and links in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, as well as its willingness to deal with any other outstanding issues, including the division of assets and liabilities;

- in the Declaration referred to it stated that in its democratic development it would be guided by the standards and gains of the Council of Europe, the European Community and other European integrations, with a view to joining them itself in the foreseeable future.

These few examples suffice to show that a persistent policy of peace is our unswerving commitment. That is why that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia should be treated as an equal partner and unavoidable factor in any peace efforts. It is primarily up to European institutions, such as this august house, to promote such an approach by international factors and the international community as a whole.

Mr. President,

The UN Security Council instituted sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on the grounds of a distorted presentation of the causes of the civil war in the former Bosnia-Herzegovina. Those sanctions represent the most drastic and unfair form of pressure towards a country and a people dedicated to peace.

The unscrupulous smear campaign that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Serb people as a whole were subjected to by certain world media constituted the height of immorality and cynicism. In the treatment of our situation the journalist profession experienced a complete moral and professional debacle.

And what is in fact the whole truth ?

The direct losses alone from 1991 to 1994 amount to between US $40 and 50 billion. The worst hit have been the impoverished middle and lower strata of the population as well as the vulnerable social groups, i.e. pensioners, children, the sick and the unemployed.

The infant mortality rate just in 1992 went up by 22 % and among diabetics the rate was doubled. One in two children in Belgrade is suffering from anemia.

Yugoslavia has admitted about 700,000 refugees from the war-torn areas of the secessionist republics, among whom, in addition to Serbs, are tens of thousands of Moslems, Croats and others. These unfortunate people are double victims: they are victims of ethnic cleansing carried out in the territories of former Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia as well as of the sanctions enforced against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

There is no international authority that could explain to a sick child or old man why there is no medicine. There is no valid argumentation to explain to an artist or scholar why in the midst of a Europe without borders an iron curtain is being erected around his country.

The sanctions have inflicted vast damage to other European countries as well and particularly our neighbours. Natural communications and economic ties among the Balkan countries have been suspended or severed altogether. That is certainly not in the interest of Europe. The development of the entire region has been impaired as well as its democratic political and economic transformation.

Today it must surely be crystal-clear that without lifting the sanctions there can be no peace in these parts. In the absence of peace there can be no cooperation nor any economic or democratic progress in the region. Without it, there can be no Balkan input to European integration. And European integration and the welfare of Europe are surely the prime concern and duty of this Parliament.

Hence our assessment that the partial suspension of sanctions, though a positive step without a doubt, is certainly not a sufficient one if our goal is peace and all the benefits that it carries in its wake. Let me reiterate on this occasion yet again that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has fulfilled all the requirements contained in the relevant Security Council Resolutions. It is my conviction that the European Parliament, representing a vast part of Europe, should resolutely call for the Resolutions imposing sanctions on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to be rescinded.

The imposition of fresh requirements for the lifting of sanctions is quite unacceptable. It is dangerous to succumb to any such demands because they only encourage the forces supporting war and fan extremisms on all sides. Unilateral decisions by individual members of the international community have the same effect. That is without any doubt the way to a further escalation of the war and the prolongation of the agony suffered by all three peoples in former Bosnia-Herzegovina with unforeseeable consequences.

Mr. President,

Our citizens see the sanctions and attempts by the international community to completely isolate us as a major injustice and totally unwarranted punishment. Certain messages that have reached us even from the highest places to the effect that the very air the Serbs breathe will be limited and that the smile will be wiped off their faces have quite rightly provoked moral indignation among our citizens.

We have harnessed all our national forces in order to weather the adversity, to survive and to prevent spiritual regression.

Despite all the difficulties provoked by the embargo and war in our immediate neighbourhood, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has sought to ensure the economic and political preconditions necessary for the development of a modern and advanced pluralistic society. Thanks to a rational economic programme we managed this year to improve a very bad economic situation. Without any external financial aid whatsoever we have checked inflation and stabilized the national currency.

Despite numerous economic and other difficulties dozens of independent social organizations, trade unions, parties, media, associations of ethnic minorities and similar organizations are operating freely. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has not been constituted on the basis of any national exclusiveness but as a civil, democratic state based on the equal rights of all its citizens. That is not the case with any of the former Yugoslav republics or any other Balkan state.

In line with its constitutional provisions and international commitments, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is ensuring the highest standards and protection of human rights and rights of members of national minorities even though war rages in its immediate neighbourhood and though it is the object of severe sanctions.

The rights enjoyed and exercised by members of national minorities are far more comprehensive than in the majority of other European states. Allow me to mention a few: education, from primary school to university level, in the language of the minority; participation in representative bodies of authority, from the local to the federal level; official use of minority languages, radio, television, theatre, newspapers and books in the languages of the minorities. In the Republic of Serbia there are seven radio and television programmes in the languages of the national minorities (four in Vojvodina and three in Kosovo and Metohija), as well as forty-nine local radio programmes and seventy-three publications. Most of these activities are financed out of the budget of the Republic of Serbia. All these rights are enjoyed also by members of the Albanian national minority living in Yugoslavia, mostly in Kosovo and Metohija, a part of the Republic of Serbia. The extremist leadership of a part of the Albanian national minority, however, is continuing persistently to advocate secessionism and, to that end, it is resorting to various means - primarily intimidation of fellow citizens - it is boycotting the legitimate constitutional order of its own state and refusing to participate in the democratic social and political life of the Republic of Serbia and of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The fact that they are preventing their own children from having a normal education is particularly deplorable - instead of the achievements of modern-day Europe, young people are being offered the darkness of the Middle Ages and self-isolation in the illegal para-educational system.

In our mind there is no dilemma with respect to the ways of dealing with the situation in Kosovo. The authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Serbia have always been ready for a dialogue and they remain so today providing such a dialogue recognizes the fact that this is an internal question and therefore needs no mediation, and that it proceeds from respect for the integrity and sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as is required in your own states when sovereignty and territorial integrity are in question.

Mr. President,

It is a fact that the civil war in a part of ex-Yugoslavia broke out because of the armed secession of certain republics from the former SFRY. Those republics, supported from abroad, saw the forcible break-up of the multiethnic federation - as a model of coexistence of several nations - as a possibility for imposing exclusive nationalistic states regardless of the price. On the other hand, the Republics of Serbia and Montenegro preserved the continuity of life in a common state on half the territory of the former country. The continuity of Yugoslavia is a contribution to democracy and integration in the Balkans and also in the whole of Europe. The citizens of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia declared themselves in favour of its continuity thereby confirming it to be an expression of their historical, civil, national and state interests. It is also, we are convinced, in line with the objectives of peace and stability in the Balkans and in Europe.

I wish to underline once again that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has no territorial claims vis-a-vis any one of its former or current neighbours. We have proven this to be true by our persistent peace-loving policy.

On the contrary, it is only natural that my country should want to normalize relations with the former Yugoslav republics. It has been and still is open to a dialogue so as to overcome the consequences of their secession and embark upon the road of cooperation.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will recognize all the newly-formed states once the questions being negotiated within the framework of the Conference on Yugoslavia have been resolved. Such a position is in conformity with the basic principles of the International Conference on Yugoslavia stipulating that there will be no recognition before the successful termination of the Conference. The normalization of relations is more than merely a decision, it is an on-going process whereby a large number of questions and consequences of the unilateral and forcible secession need to be addressed. The recognition of individual republics should come as the logical consequence and culmination of that process. A prerequisite is that the breakaway republics do not question the right of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to international legal continuity.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is more interested than any other country in the region in the earliest possible settlement of all the problems provoked by secession and in the whole region embarking on a road of stable social, economic and democratic progress. This position of ours totally refutes all allegations of the danger threatening from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, or as some irresponsible or misinformed circles are prone to allege - from Greater Serbia. Such allegations, far from being well- intentioned , also distract attention from the real causes of the problem. Such fabrications provide fertile ground for backstage machinations masterminded by regional and extra-regional factors to promote their own parochial interests.

Fully aware of the importance of Yugoslav-Croatian or Serb-Croatian relations for stabilization in the territory of former Yugoslavia and for future developments in the Balkans , we have taken the first, yet significant steps towards the normalization of those relations.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia continues to support the Vance Plan, of which it is one of the signatories. It advocates a three-tier i.e. phased settlement of all outstanding problems - going from the simpler towards the more complicated ones. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will seek to enhance mutual trust but it will not interfere in the direct talks between Zagreb and Knin. It will accept any solution agreed to by the two parties.

I emphatically condemn yesterday's bombing of the Udbina airport in the Republic of Serbian Krajina which I consider to be an irresponsible and unjustified act. By acting in this way the United Nations Security Council has once again succumbed to the influence of those countries whose interest are served by the prolongation rather than the termination of the war. At a time when a large part of the international community, and particularly the European countries is actively involved in the peace process, this act constitutes a direct impediment to that process and encourages the militants and extremists among all three parties to the conflict. Hence, there is a great danger of the escalation of the conflict beyond the borders of the former Bosnia-Herzegovina which runs directly counter to the interests of Europe - for after all this is happening in its backyard. In the interest of peace in Europe I call on all countries - members of the U.N. Security Council to reconsider their decision to extend their military operations beyond the territory of the former Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Yugoslavia will continue to work for the earliest possible peaceful and just political settlement to the civil war in the former Yugoslav republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Having stressed from the very beginning of the crisis that the only way to a solution is by adopting an approach that will equally acknowledge the interests of all three peoples: the Moslems, Serbs and Croats in that former Yugoslav republic, we supported the plan of the Contact Group, which in spite of certain shortcomings, we assessed as being conducive to a solution that would protect the interests of all the three peoples alike. For only an even-handed approach in terms of the interests of all three peoples can serve as a basis for durable peace which we all aspire to. We are all too familiar with the tragic consequences of the premature recognition of the breakaway republics. Thus, in the case of the former Bosnia-Herzegovina, the question of recognition can logically be raised only once peace has been established and the negotiating process completed. The policy of double standards with respect to the parties to the conflict has proven to be the worst possible option.

There is no doubt that there have been some welcome changes in the attitude of some international factors - less partiality or more objectivity - particularly in Europe. However, certain

influential countries have lately been repeating some old mistakes and committing new ones. The consequences were only to be expected - the escalation of the civil war. Among those mistakes are the unilateral lifting of the arms embargo for one of the parties to the conflict and demands for that decision to win collective support. This amounts to overt alignment with the Moslem side even at a time when UN protected areas are being used for launching fresh military offensives.

Siding with one party to the conflict are both countries with a long tradition of democracy and those in which dictatorships and extremist regimes are in power. It is indeed difficult to explain such a paradox in the present-day world in which democratic nations, both through international institutions and directly, are seeking to globalize respect for democracy and human rights to such a degree as to elevate it to a philosophy of international relations, the credo and basis for the establishment of any relations whatsoever with another country.

I am deeply convinced that the only way to achieve a speedy and lasting peace in the area of the former Bosnia-Herzegovina is for all three sides to accept the plan of the Contact Group. That is what the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is actively advocating. To this end, guarantees in writing should be given to the Republic of Srpska and the Serb people in Bosnia-Herzegovina that they will be able to exercise the same rights as the Moslems and Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This would mean the assertion of the equal rights of the parties to the conflict and formal sanctioning of the position agreed upon on that matter between representatives of the international community and the highest officials of my country.

It is also essential that all the sanctions enforced against FRY should be immediately and fully lifted. All warmongers - and there are such forces among the members of all the three nations- would thus be deprived of all argumentation. This would also restore the trust of the Serb people in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the international community's good intentions. The war in the former Bosnia-Herzegovina must come to an end. Regrettably, the recent offensive operations clearly show that neither the Moslems nor the Croats are sincere when they declare their readiness to cease hostilities. The arms embargo is constantly being drastically violated. Yet the world organization is doing nothing to prevent this.

It is necessary for pressure to be brought to bear on the Moslem and Croatian sides to suspend their offensive operations against the Serbs in Bosnia- Herzegovina and for violations of the arms embargo to be prevented. In this way favourable conditions would be ensured for representatives of all three peoples to find a lasting and generally acceptable solution by continuing the negotiating process within the framework of the Contact Group Plan and through direct dialogue.

Mr. President,

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia condemns all crimes, extremist behaviour and intolerance, as well as all forms of ethnic cleansing or other demonstrations of racial, national and religious discrimination wherever they may occur in the territory of the former SFRY and whoever their perpetrator may be.

The forcible break-up of the former SFRY has not resolved inter-ethnic relations in the Balkans but has indeed drastically aggravated them. The premature recognition of the breakaway former Yugoslav republics, with the European Community taking the lead and, in that context, the proclamation of administrative boundaries as internationally recognized borders, left almost a third of the Serb population forcibly cut off and nationally disenfranchised.

The secession of these republics meant both de facto and de jure discrimination against the Serbs who, though a constituent nation, were denied their constitutional and inalienable right to self-determination. One of the very difficult aspects of the crisis in the area of the former SFRY is the position of the Serbs under Croatian rule outside the UNPA zones. At the very beginning of the crisis the Serb people were arbitrarily and without any explanation excluded from the Croatian Constitution which is still in force. Croatia is continuing to exert pressure and to discriminate against the Serbs on a large scale. The stream of Serb refugees continues before the very eyes of Europe. It is high time that this major problem be examined free of past prejudice and that the appropriate mechanisms of the CSCE and the European Union be set in motion to protect the human, national and civil rights of the Serbs in Croatia.

A specific form of pressure on the Serbs is Croatia's attempt to rehabilitate the Ustasha regime and the war criminals responsible for genocide of the Serbs and Jews during World War II.

The position of the Serbs who have remained under Moslem rule in Sarajevo and other cities within the Moslem-Croatian Federation as "ethnic hostages" is also extremely difficult. They are forced to live in an atmosphere of burgeoning Islamic fundamentalism, hatred and violence.

Mr. President,

The Balkans and the Balkan peoples have had enough of divisions, conflicts and war. It is time to turn a new leaf in history. It is time for all the peoples and states in this region to be able to look forward to brighter prospects. The need for strengthening all forms of cooperation and integration among the countries of the Balkans and South-Eastern Europe is acute. European institutions, including the European Parliament, should contribute to a correct approach being adopted towards the Balkans as an integral part of Europe. I believe this to be their duty. The Balkans cannot be viewed as a burden, but, rather, as a large and as yet unexplored, let alone tapped potential for building a common future of Europe.

One of the essential preconditions is the reintegration of Yugoslavia in the international community and the European family of nations to which it has always belonged.

We expect the European Union to take the lead in renewing our participation in all international and regional organizations. We feel we have the right to expect the European Union to also be the initiator of the complete and definitive lifting of the sanctions of the international community, as it was the first to enforce restrictive measures already at the end of 1991.

For the problems threatening peace and stability in Europe to be resolved, it is essential that all the European states be included in the CSCE and to participate in its activities on a footing of equality. Stability and peace in Europe, as well as the CSCE itself, cannot be based, nor have they ever been based, on a hierarchical relationship among states. In building the system of European security and cooperation it is imperative that it should provide full and equal guarantees to all the European states. Every precedent is dangerous.

Mr. President,

As a Danubian and Mediterranean country, Yugoslavia is centrally placed in a region which has for centuries been the fount or meeting point of European cultures. Ever since prehistoric times when our ancestors created one of the oldest original European civilizations in the canyons of the Danube, in Lepenski Vir, we have been a part of Europe - for better and for worse, in war as in peace. I should just like to refer to the post-World War II period, when for years Yugoslavia played a key role in the process of European cooperation and the struggle to overcome bloc divisions. The former SFRY was, inter alia, the first country of Central and Eastern Europe to establish diplomatic and institutional relations with the European Community.

Today as then, Yugoslavia as a multiethnic, multicultural and multiconfessional country at a crossroads, has an indisputable key role to play as a factor of stability, integration and economic linkage of the region and of Europe. By its consistent domestic policy of national equality and its policy of peace, Yugoslavia is making a major contribution to the overall development and stability of the region.

Accordingly, we view cooperation with the European Union and its institutions as one of our foreign policy priorities. The natural need for economic, cultural, human and all other kinds of links between our region and Europe as a whole cannot be prevented for any length of time by any isolation or sanctions.

We urge the renewal and promotion of cooperation between this Parliament and the Federal Assembly of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. We are counting on the European Parliament to take an objective and impartial stance in relation to the protagonists of the crisis and the war which is still raging in the former Yugoslavia and to acknowledge the constructive and peaceloving policy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Of utmost importance for the prosperity and stability of Europe is not to permit the marginalization of individual regions of our continent. The Europe of blocs should not be allowed to be replaced by a Europe of countries of the "first, second or third order". For Europe to be able to function as an entity, it is essential that economic disparities be redressed. Yugoslavia is ready to continue fully to contribute to the realization of the lofty goals of peace, stability and economic prosperity in our region and in Europe.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia does not seek for itself anything more than others enjoy, but neither will it settle for anything less. All we ask is the right to build our country to the best of our ability and knowledge and to compete on a footing of equality with others for a place in European economic, democratic and cultural integration processes - in the way and to the extent that is in the mutual and common interest and to the benefit of all Europeans.